

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

July 26, 2024

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on July 26, 2024. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Beth Kabes and Lois Todd-Meyer; Tiffany Carter and Diane Downer via Go To Meeting. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Christa Porter, and Jennifer Wrampe.

Beth Kabes called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. This meeting complies with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and Governor's Executive Order Limited Waiver for Public Meetings.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Diane Downer and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Lois Todd-Meyer - aye. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes: (May 17, 2024) a motion was made by Tiffany Carter and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the minutes. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye. Motion approved.

Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

Beth Kabes – has registered for a board session during the United for Libraries virtual conference that will be held July 30 – August 1.

Diane Downer – will be attending the Western Library System annual meeting August 5.

Lois Todd-Meyer – no report

Tiffany Carter – no report

Director's Report

Personnel – Rod Wagner reported that all open staff positions have been filled. Governor Pillen's executive order provides for elimination of staff positions vacant for more than 90 days with some exceptions.

Veronica Powell was appointed to fill the cataloger position, and began work July 8. Elizabeth Macias has been hired for the TBBS Studio and Book Circulation Support position and Bailey Mooney has started as the TBBS Marketing/Outreach Coordinator.

Public Library Accreditation – Christa Porter reported that the annual public library accreditation process started on July 1. Online training workshops were held and the recordings are available. There are 39 libraries up for reaccreditation and 45 unaccredited libraries were invited to apply. Any

public library that submits the annual public library survey and is a legally established library is eligible to apply. The deadline for submitting the accreditation application is October 1.

E-rate and Library Broadband Improvements – Porter said that 73 libraries received approvals for a total of \$301,320 in discounts. Two libraries have applications pending. Hildreth and Exeter public libraries applied and were approved for fiber construction. Porter presented an NCompass live session on E-Rate 101 basics. E-rate is specifically for school or library internet connections. The FCC approved rules that allow hotspots and off-campus support for internet through the regular E-rate program. This year, E-rate started a cybersecurity pilot program. Schools and libraries can apply to be a part of the pilot. The service is not yet available for all schools and libraries, but any can apply and may be selected to participate in the pilot. There is \$200 million available for the three-year pilot program. The program will provide funds for installing next generation firewalls or any resource needed to improve cybersecurity.

Technology Reviews and Support for Rural Libraries – Andrew ‘Sherm’ Sherman reported he has mostly been working with the MEDICA grant but it ties into the E-rate program. What he has seen is libraries get their fiber installation and then don’t get the speed they’re supposed to get. The reason they’re not getting maximum speed is that they have old networking equipment. The MEDICA grant is being used to purchase new networking equipment for libraries that are installing fiber connections for broadband service improvement. Sherm estimates the upgrade cost is about \$400 per library. Sherm is travelling to libraries to determine what equipment is needed and help with installation.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Wagner reported an increase in the number of books submitted for Nebraska Book Awards consideration. The award decisions are expected to be made within the next two weeks.

The National Book Festival will be held in Washington DC on August 24. Tessa Timperley and Gabe Kramer will attend from the NLC staff and will cover the Nebraska exhibit. Steve Fosselman, NCB board member, will also attend as the NCB representative and will assist with the exhibit.

The Celebration of Nebraska Books and the Nebraska Book Festival will re-connect this year as a single event. The Nebraska Celebration of Books will be held on Saturday, October 12, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln city campus union. The event will include a full day program with author presentations, exhibits and a reception. The 2025 One Book One Nebraska selection will also be announced.

Financial Report

July Financial Report – Wagner said that at the end of June and end of the state fiscal year the NLC’s state funds operating budget expenditures were under budget in major categories. Personnel and office space lease are the major operating expenses. Some categories were over budget and some were under. Expenditures are taken into consideration as the current year budget is set up and that becomes the base for the next budget request. Federal funds are within budget at this time with the federal fiscal year ending September 30.

2025-2027 Biennium Budget – Wagner said the 2025-2027 biennium budget request is due September 15, a Sunday. The state budget office asked state agencies to submit budget requests by September 12. Personnel is the major operating budget item. The personnel budget is based on current authorized positions and the funding request will follow budget instructions for salaries and

benefits for the two-year biennium budget. The second largest operating expense is the office space lease. The request is based on annual increases included in the lease agreement. The NLC is in the middle of a ten-year lease. Budget instructions also provide amounts to include for fees charged by other state agencies – OCIO charges, accounting, insurance, auditing, etc. The state aid to libraries program is the area that has included the major requests for increases state funding including state aid to public libraries, regional library systems, online resource subscriptions, Nebraska eReads (ebooks and audiobooks for the OverDrive libraries consortium, and the Lincoln, Omaha, and Ralston libraries. The legislature’s special session will be a significant factor for FY 2025-2027 state appropriations in consideration of tax policy changes and state budget reductions.

New Business

Director’s Salary - Wagner reported that most state employees received a 5% pay increase on July 1. Agency directors and other non-classified personnel are not included in the July 1 pay change; their governing bodies determine their pay. Wagner requested a 5% pay raise effective July 15.

A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Diane Downer to approve the salary increase. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Lois Todd-Meyer - aye. Motion approved.

Next Meeting Dates –September 6

Adjournment

Beth Kabes adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe